

Message Text

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ACTION OES-07

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 AID-20 EB-08 L-03 SP-02

AGRE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 IO-13 /074 W

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FM AMEMBASSY FREETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7748

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EO 11652: NA

TAGS: SPOP, SL

SUBJ: POPULATION GROWTH AND ADEQUATE FOOD PRODUCTION

REF: (A) STATE 107370, (B) FREETOWN 1527

1. DURING CALL ON MINISTER OF DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC PLANNING SOLOMON PRATT, MAY 23, I REVIEWED CONTENTS OF REFTTEL A AND LEFT A SUMMARY OF MAIN POINTS. I TOLD PRATT WE CONSIDERED HIS MINISTRY TO BE ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT TO THE SUCCESS OF SIERRA LEONE'S EFFORTS TO INCREASE FOOD PRODUCTION AND I COMMENDED HIM ON HIS RECENT DECISION TO ESTABLISH A POPULATION PLANNING UNIT WITHIN HIS MINISTRY.

2. PRATT SAID THAT ALTHOUGH HIS MINISTRY FINANCIALLY SUPPORTS THE PLANNED PARENTHOOD ASSOCIATION AND DOES INCLUDE POPULATION ANALYSIS IN ITS PLANNING EFFORTS, HE PERSONALLY DOES NOT FAVOR RESTRICTIVE CONTROLS ON SIERRA LEONE'S POPULATION GROWTH. HE SAID THAT SIERRA LEONE WAS UNDERPOPULATED AND THAT EMPHASIS SHOULD BE GIVEN TO INCREASED DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE TO ENABLE THE COUNTRY TO EXPLOIT ITS LAND RESERVES. HE COMMENTED THAT IN FLYING OVER SIERRA LEONE HE IS STRUCK BY HUGE TRACTS OF UNFARMED LAND. HE SAID THE KEY TO INCREASED FOOD PRODUCTION IN SIERRA LEONE WAS THE INTRODUCTION OF LABOR-SAVING DEVICES AND CAPITAL INPUTS FOR TRACTORS AND FERTILIZERS.

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3. PRATT EXPRESSED GRATITUDE TO THE USG FOR CALLING TO HIS ATTENTION THE RESULTS OF THE VARIOUS STUDIES AND EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT AFRICA COULD HELP MEET THE FOOD NEEDS OF THE WORLD. HE SAID THE TIME HAD COME FOR STATESMEN TO RECONSIDER THEIR ATTITUDES ON POPULATION GROWTH AND FOOD PRODUCTION AND THAT IF WORLD FOOD NEEDS IN THE MID-1980S WERE TO BE MET,

INCREASED EFFORTS HAD TO BE UNDERTAKEN NOW.

4. EMBASSY COMMENT: PRATT WAS ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL ADVOCATES OF MECHANIZED BOLILAND RICE FARMING, WHICH PROVED TO BE A FAILURE LARGELY BECAUSE OF LACK OF MAINTENANCE SKILLS AND SPARE PARTS. THE MISSION, HOWEVER, BELIEVES THAT APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGY TRANSFERS TO INCREASE FARMER PRODUCTIVITY SHOULD REMAIN A HIGH PRIORITY IN U.S. ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS. END COMMENT.
NORTH

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
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